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SHARON LINSTEDT - News Business Reporter. Buffalo News. (Financial edition). Buffalo, N.Y.: Nov 29, 1997. pg. A.1

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The East Amherst resident planned her Black Friday buying blitz like nothing short of a military assault, as she hit her targets armed with a timetable, a budget and even a list of **substitute gifts**.

"My family always kids me about how organized I am," Mrs. Manning said. "This year, I took the extra step of making a window shopping trip to J.C. Penney to check what they had so I'd be ready to take advantage of the early bird sale."

Steve and Meg Curry of Buffalo approached the holiday shopping task a bit differently early Friday. Mrs. Curry pointed out apparel she would like to find under the tree Christmas morning, while her husband took notes as they toured Kaufmann's department store.

Full Text (1043 words)

Copyright Buffalo News Nov 29, 1997

For Carol Manning, a gift list was just the start of her day-after-Thanksgiving shopping arsenal.

The East Amherst resident planned her Black Friday buying blitz like nothing short of a military assault, as she hit her targets armed with a timetable, a budget and even a list of **substitute gifts**.

She even packed provisions -- a cooler of breakfast and lunch items stowed in her vehicle.

"My family always kids me about how organized I am," Mrs. Manning said. "This year, I took the extra step of making a window shopping trip to J.C. Penney to check what they had so I'd be ready to take advantage of the early bird sale."

By 7:45 a.m., she already had visited [Wal-Mart](#) and [Target](#) stores and, clutching three big bags, was

emerging from Penney's in Walden Galleria.

"My kids and husband are going to meet me here at 9 a.m., so I'm going to stash this stuff in the car and rest a little while I eat the breakfast I packed," she said.

"I'd say I'm about halfway done with all my shopping at this point, so I can relax a little."

Steve and Meg Curry of Buffalo approached the holiday shopping task a bit differently early Friday. Mrs. Curry pointed out apparel she would like to find under the tree Christmas morning, while her husband took notes as they toured Kaufmann's department store.

"This way I don't make mistakes," the husband explained. "She shows the exact things she wants, and then I buy them while she's off getting my stuff."

Across Western New York, retailers were doing their best to lure the earliest of early-bird shoppers to their doorsteps, with discount stores like [Kmart](#) and [Wal-Mart](#) ready for business at 6 a.m. Most mall retailers followed suit, opening their doors at 7 a.m.

Several stores offered discounts between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. as an extra incentive for shoppers to trade their warm beds for bustling retail aisles a couple hours earlier than usual. A yawning but cheerful [Gap](#) employee in Walden Galleria admitted she had a tough time getting to work at the early hour, but said she rang up a "nice, big sale" within minutes of unlocking the door.

"It's sort of an adventure," she said. "It's fun to see all these people out so early. And they are all in good moods."

Jim Soos, Galleria general manager, said the early-hour buying activity gave a jump-start to what is considered one of the biggest retail days of the year and the official start of the all-important Christmas shopping period.

Soos reported strong sales for several of the merchants he had checked in with at midday.

"By opening early, we were able to build into the day. We certainly weren't at capacity at 7:15 a.m., but we were way ahead of last year when this place didn't start really rockin' and rollin' until around 11 a.m.," Soos said.

And shoppers were exhibiting a sign every mall manager looks for in gauging activity -- most were carrying bags of just-purchased merchandise.

"That's the tell-tale sign for us. We don't count bodies as much as we count packages. We're seeing a lot of packages," he added.

With predictions about this season's shopper enthusiasm running from single-digit sales gains to double-digit dips compared with last year, retailers around the state had reason to smile Friday, according to Ted Potrikus, executive director of the Retail Council of New York State.

A check with a variety of merchants statewide found most liked what they saw on Black Friday, a milestone day that often sets the tone for the entire holiday season.

"The good news is that people are out, at least looking at what they plan to buy," Potrikus said. "Across the state, the parking lot counts look strong, which at least tells us they are interested."

The council will release data Tuesday on the first weekend of the Christmas shopping season.

"At that point, we'll know how many actually left the mall carrying bags. Right now, all we can say for sure is that the crowds were in the malls," he added.

Retailers have reason for concern going into the most important weeks of their fiscal calendar. Despite record levels of consumer confidence and low inflation, sales for much of the year have been less than stellar. The last two holiday seasons have been disappointing for retailers.

According to a recent Associated Press poll by ICR of Media, Pa., nearly a third of Americans say they will spend less on gifts this Christmas than in the last few years. Fifty-six percent of those polled said spending will stay about the same, while 12 percent say they will spend more.

"While the overall economy is going well, consumer finances aren't great," said Carl Steidtmann, chief economist at Management Horizons, a division of Price Waterhouse. "There's huge levels of consumer debt, and people have been less eager to buy."

Also weighing on retailers is the threat of bad weather which could keep shoppers away from stores, while warm weather may stop others from buying sweaters and other cold-weather goods.

Retailers face new competition from outside their industry over the holidays. Many consumers choose family vacations or gift certificates to spas over traditional Christmas gifts.

But many retailers still count on a strong Christmas. Toy stores are expected to have a solid season, thanks to the wide array of products in big demand.

After the Tickle Me Elmo mania a year ago, Tyco Toys' Sesame Street dolls, ©Microsoft's Actimates Barney and virtual pets already are in short supply. Video games are also expected to be big sellers.

"A lot will be determined in the next four weeks," said Michael Goldstein, chief executive for Paramus, N.J.-based Toys R Us, the nation's biggest toy store chain. "But this year we are seeing a lot of items in demand, many more than last year."

[Illustration]

RONALD J. COLLERAN/Buffalo News Joanne Cieslinski of Eden takes a well-deserved break before continuing Friday's holiday shopping blitz in McKinley Mall in the Town of Hamburg. Associated Press After filling the trunk, Sherry Henson, left, buries Wendy Henson, center, and Katrina Denham with bags of Yule gifts at the Gadsden, Ala., mall. They began shopping at 4 a.m. Friday.

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Article URL: http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:pqd&rft_val_fmt=ori:fmt:kev:n**Abstract** (Article Summary)

The City of Anaheim and its Visitors and Convention Bureau handed [Tom Starr] \$250,000 in interest-free loans Friday. Four corporations donated a combined \$125,000 to keep the Freedom Bowl afloat, he said.

Before getting the two city checks, Starr had to do some running around town to pick up **other contributions** to meet the \$527,000 **payment**. In the city agreement, a clause said that the \$125,000 loan was **contingent** upon the receipt of **other funds, gifts and contributions** totaling \$402,000-or the remainder needed to meet the \$527,000 **payment-by** Monday.

Starr stopped off at another business in the afternoon to collect \$25,000, got the \$125,000 from the convention bureau and, finally, returned to City Hall for its \$125,000.

Full Text (841 words)*Copyright, The Times Mirror Company; Los Angeles Times 1986all Rights reserved)*

Friday was a frenzied day for Tom Starr, executive director of the Freedom Bowl. The future of this year's game-and the bowl itself-was at stake.

Only some last-minute running around town to pick up loans and donations saved the bowl from passing into history.

"I got everything done," Starr said Friday evening. "I feel like Indiana Jones-it went down to the last minute."

The City of Anaheim and its Visitors and Convention Bureau handed Starr \$250,000 in interest-free loans Friday. Four corporations donated a combined \$125,000 to keep the Freedom Bowl afloat, he said.

Earlier this week, Starr, backed by some of Orange County's largest corporations, went before the Anaheim City Council to ask for an interest-free loan to pay the universities of Washington and Colorado a combined \$527,000 for their participation in last year's game. If bowl officials had missed Monday's payment deadline-which had been extended from March 30-the NCAA would no longer have sanctioned the game.

In the red about \$1.1 million, Starr had told council members that the fate of the December football game rested in their hands. Saying the bowl added to the city's tourism industry and image, the council Tuesday unanimously consented to the request. Two of the five-member council either are on the 1986 board of directors or advisers list.

Shortly after 1 p.m. Friday, the City Council convened during a special meeting to grant final approval to a \$125,000 loan. The Anaheim Visitors and Convention Bureau gave the debt-plagued bowl another \$125,000.

But before getting the two city checks, Starr had to do some running around town to pick up **other contributions** to meet the \$527,000 **payment**. In the city agreement, a clause said that the \$125,000 loan was **contingent** upon the receipt of **other funds, gifts and contributions** totaling \$402,000-or the remainder needed to meet the \$527,000 **payment-by Monday**.

With \$142,000 already in hand, Starr visited three corporations Friday morning and picked up a combined \$100,000 in gifts.

"As soon as you get \$402,000 we'll give you a check," City Atty. Jack L. White told Starr after the brief council meeting Friday afternoon.

Starr stopped off at another business in the afternoon to collect \$25,000, got the \$125,000 from the convention bureau and, finally, returned to City Hall for its \$125,000.

"It's been a long day," Starr said, adding that the payments were sent to the universities Friday.

The Freedom Bowl has suffered financially since its first game in 1984, when heavy rains kept many fans away and a television contract ended in a lawsuit. The bowl has been trying to break even ever since, Starr said.

"We know you're going to make a success out of it," Anaheim Mayor Don Roth told bowl officials Friday. "We want to show you have the support of the city."

Bowl officials said they have worked in the past year to expand bowl support from an Anaheim level to a countywide level, changing the board of directors from a "Who's Who in Anaheim" to a "Who's Who in Orange County."

The directors include Mike Bullis of the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, Bill Bell of AirCal in Newport Beach and Frank King of Titan Capital Corp. in Tustin. The 1986 advisers are Orange County Sheriff Brad Gates, state Sen. John Seymour, county Supervisor Ralph Clark, Knott's Berry Farm's Marion Knott and Roth, who was listed on the board of directors in 1984 and 1985.

Bowl officials are optimistic about breaking even this year-for the first time. Although, as of March 31, the corporation reported that it had spent \$668,419 more than it has generated in revenues, officials estimate a surplus of \$26,255 following the 1986 Freedom Bowl.

Kevin Forth, Freedom Bowl president, said steps taken to ensure a "blueprint for success" include signing a new television contract, hiring a public relations firm and attracting corporate sponsorship. Sponsors include national companies and some of the largest firms in the county, such as the Irvine Co., Pacific Bell, Disneyland and Coca-Cola USA. (Starr declined to give the names of the companies that came to the rescue Friday with checks.)

The bowl's board members also commit themselves to \$10,000 each. Members, such as Anaheim Mayor Pro Tem Irv Pickler, can sell up to \$10,000 worth in tickets and other packages or make up the difference themselves, Starr said.

The city attorney said both Pickler and Roth could vote on the loan issue last Tuesday and did not have to declare a conflict of interest because of the corporation's nonprofit status.

Another board member is Bill Snyder of the Anaheim Visitors and Convention Bureau. According to Snyder, about \$6.6 million came into the city during the 1985 game, which attracted almost 31,000 fans and had 6,878 no-shows. The 1984 game drew 24,093 fans and had about 6,000 no-shows.

Snyder said that increased ticket sales and subsequent visitors to Anaheim hotels, attractions and other businesses are expected to generate about \$10.5 million for the city this year. So far, about 19,000 tickets to the

1986 Freedom Bowl have been sold, Starr said.

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